13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

the Sindh valley narrowing and just make out the snow-covered crest of a mountain which barred its upper end and indicated the site of the pass, about which we must say a few words.

The name Zogi La has another meaning attributed to it by the Tibetan, as well as the one just alleged, one which indicates the terrors that abound when winter holds it in its icy grip, namely the place of four demons. It is a pass of 11,500 feet, which separates Kashmir and what to many represents civilization, from the wild uplands of the Himalayas and the mysteries of the "distant morning lands" of Central Asia. Though its altitude is not very high for a pass, only equalling that of Leh, its difficulties are great. The summer road should be open from 15th May to 15th November, for on those dates the rates of transport alter from the high winter ones indicating coolie porterage only, to the lower summer ones of pony transport. In winter the difficulties are often insuperable owing to soft snow, blizzards and biting winds, and often the mails are delayed two or three weeks before the runners dare attempt the crossing, the telegraph wires themselves not infrequently breaking with the weight of snow. Traffic is at a standstill from mid-December to early March, save for adventurous travellers who, even then, it is stated, get themselves carried over in baskets on the backs of coolies, sturdy inhabitants of the villages bordering the Ladak side of the pass. In the centre of the Zogi La is a rest-house, often up to the eaves in snow, called Machoi, situated on the top of a small sharp hill, one side of which is sheltered from the prevailing winds, and has two or three small buildings, a serai and a telegraph office nestling under it. The telegraph master must have a dreary time in winter, and in the middle of May is moved to another post higher up on the road to Leh. The winter of 1924–5 was exceptionally mild and very little snow fell on the pass. April in Kashmir was a very hot month, more like June, and it was expected that the pass

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

CHAPTER VI

Back to Lamaland

AT Matayan we have really crossed the Zogi, but it is at Dras that we change our transport, and see the last of the steeds and their syces (grooms) who have brought us over. The former place consists of a few huts, a serai (caravanserai) and a bungalow, in a desolate wind-swept spot with practically no supplies accessible. Probably owing to wind and weather the traveller is here left to his own resources, with the result that several visitors have launched into poetry, of which there is an amusing collection of rhymes in the bungalow book. The rest-house has two small rooms with well-boarded windows and a limited verandah with a windscreened corner. Here the Memsahib has recollections of a real pressure of accommodation. Travelling down from Leh to send her elder child off home to school, and to try the effect of the lower altitude on the ill-health of her little one of two-and-a-half, an awkward incident occurred between Dras and Matayan, for one of the zos carrying luggage fell down the khud, and his load rolled on into the stream. The locks of a suitcase were broken on the boulders, and away floated all the baby's warm clothes for the return journey and daintier ones for the civilization of Srinagar, and also all the contents of a sewing basket, whose empty case remained in position in the crown of a hat, not a nice quandary to be left in with two children, and no needle or cotton, so far out in the wilds! A yakdan, with all the Memsahib's civilized clothes, shoes, books and incidentally money—was also

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

in Kashmir was Commissioner for the Government of India jointly with the Wazir for this work.

Under the Wazir-i-Wazaret came the Tehsildar of Leh, responsible for the collection of revenue and assisted by a Naib Tehsildar. Below them, and charged with minor administrative jobs in the villages and along the main roads, were the zehildars, the lumbadars and the kardars. The latter minor officials were responsible for giving Central Asian travellers any assistance that they needed along the Trade Route. They had, however, to be natives of Tibetan extraction.

The ancient Ladaki political organization was still in existence at the time of my visit, but was divested of all power, and only survived because of the prestige which it still enjoyed in the eyes of the people. Thus the king of Ladak (*La-Dwags rGyal-po*), although reduced to the rank of raja of Stog and receiving a small allowance from the Kashmir durbar, was even then looked up to as the country's legitimate ruler.

In his castle of Stog which I visited, I was surprised to see that the king was assisted not only by court officials who had kept the titles of days gone by, but also by a council of ministers calling themselves *Kalön* (*bKa-bLon*). These personages, although without any real power, still met in a legislative assembly of their own; their positions were hereditary and they received the (modest) revenue of the village that each of them lived in. I was told that other offices, such as those of governor of a province or *Lönpo* (*bLon-po*), revenue officer of the Crown or *Nangdzö* (*Nang-mDzod*), lumbadar or *Tungspun* (*Drung-spun?*) and assistant lumbadar or *Togache* (*T'hoga-ches?*), no longer existed although the descendants of those who had held them hereditarily were still looked upon with some consideration. At social occasions involving only Ladakis, these people were still given privileged positions. I met the Queen on this occasion, and found that, as I had been told, she was a sister of the Thakur of Gungrang in Lahul. She was not living in polyandry as her husband had no brothers, but it was expected that her two boys would eventually take one wife in common, as was the ancient custom.

5. *Land-tenure and economy*

The collection of revenue in Ladak is naturally the responsibility of the Kashmir administration. The basis of assessment of the revenue is a rather arbitrary one, being simply the holding or the house, which is called *zhing-kham* (*Zhing-K'hams*) allotted by the State and which is farmed by a single family unit, the head of the latter being responsible

1; Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir
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it cannot be seen from the road. On our way we pass Thārū, a collection of eight or ten houses, with corresponding cultivation; then we cross the last of the plateaus, from which descending we reach a little garden planted by the roadside for the shelter of travellers, which is close to the village of Phayāng. Thence a few miles by the side of the river brought us to Pitak, the last village before Leh. 133x 361 [485]

All the cultivated spots hitherto met with in Ladākh were watered from side-streams—streams coming almost immediately from the mountains with a more or less steep fall. But at Pitak the land is irrigated from the Indus itself. For we are here at the beginning of a part of the Indus Valley, where the bottom is wide and is occupied by a flat of alluvium, over which the waters of the main stream can be brought. 312 138x

At Pitak there is an isolated rock a few hundred feet high, on which all the older buildings are situated. The monastery is on the summit at one end, and there is a fortification—of two towers connected by a double wall—that must have helped to make the rock a strong position. Formerly all the houses were, for protection's sake, built thus high up; this was very commonly the case throughout Ladākh, only in the last generation or so have the people taken generally to building in the plain. 361 792 712

We are now but five miles from Leh, the capital; it is indeed within sight from the summit of the rock; let us from here take a general view of the geographical position of that town.

The river is 10,500 feet above the sea; it is flowing with a gentle current in a flat, the surface of which is in great part of pebbles only, but here and there it is of such a fine alluvial soil that the people have been able to bring it under cultivation. On the south-west side this low flat is bordered by a stretch of sloping gravelly ground, consisting of a number of coalesced fans that have been deposited by streams having their origin in the mountains on the south—mountains which rise up to 20,000 feet. On the north-east of the river there continues the same great granite ridge, at the foot of which we have been passing; the summit of it is about 12 miles from the Indus, as the crow flies. 133x

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir
W. Tibetans AJ4

or two on the ice over the Indus itself. Thus by ice and snow the way was made smoother; lambskin coats and caps and felt stockings kept out the cold, and the best houses of the villages afforded at every stage a shelter that in that season was welcome and comfortable. 132 [485]

Nearing Leh, we find that the ranges of mountains, on opposite sides of the valley, rise to about equal height, and for a considerable distance seem equal and parallel. But each has a character of its own. The one on the south-west rises, in a direct distance of nine miles, to a ridge which is commonly 19,000 feet high; just in front of the town of Leh is a peak of 20,000 feet, which retains perpetual snow; indeed there are on the range some fields of snow with small glaciers leading down from them; the lower limit of perpetual snow here is 18,500 feet. This ridge is indented by ravines in regular succession that open to the Indus Valley; the spurs between the ravines rise, at the last, where they near the main valley, to greater heights than they have in the parts near the ridge; so there is a second line of eminences, overlooking the Indus flat; these (which are composed of strata of shale and sandstone, dipping inwards), when viewed from certain spots, appear to form a continuous ridge; but in truth they are separated from each other by the ravines, and are each joined by a neck to the range behind; looked at from the flat these heights are seen to rise along a well-marked straight line. The alternating ravines have narrow openings from which project alluvial fans, which, meeting, form a sloping stony tract between the hills and the flatter alluvium of the main river. From the foot of these mountains, across the valley, to the nearest beginning of the opposite hills, is from two to three miles. These others are of a form different. The summit line indeed of this ridge also, as has been pointed out, is 19,000 or 20,000 feet in altitude; snow and small glaciers are found at the highest parts, but on the whole the ridge has a rocky surface. The difference of form lies in the character of the spurs. Sharp-ridged spurs descend from the central ridge to the Indus Valley; though possessing some irregularity of outline they decline without any great interruption, and project in long 133*

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir
W Tibetans AV4

are of a dark-brown colour, in form for the most part rounded; their whole surface is covered with loose stones, either taluses or else rock disintegrated into angular blocks, remaining as yet unmoved. On the farther side comes a stony valley similar to the one we have just left; down this we continue for a day and a half's march, going sometimes across taluses, sometimes along alluvial terraces, over stony ground, gradually descending till we reach the Chângchenmo River itself. Here is a valley stretching straight east and west for far, the bottom of it a stony tract with the river flowing through it in many channels. In front of us, on the north side, is a bold line of mountains 5000 or 6000 feet above us, rocky in face, rising to a rugged ridge.

Below this spot where we first reach it (called both Pâmzâl and Tsolû) I have not followed the Chângchenmo Valley; I believe it in that part to be a rapid stream flowing between narrowing rocky mountains. Above, the valley is partly occupied by the wide gravelly river-bed and partly by alluvial terraces, all stony and bare; the hills that bound this vary much in height and steepness, some are smooth-sided and comparatively low, others both lofty and steep. A branch from the main valley leads to the north, up to the plateaus that will be described in the next chapter; it contains a stream of as great volume as the other. Gogrâ is a place where a rest-house has been built a few miles up that valley, soon above which it divides into Kugrâng, the westerly branch, and Chonglung, the north-easterly.

The places where the three requisites for travellers in these regions occur together, namely, water, grass, and fuel, are found several miles apart. One is Pâmzâl, already mentioned; here is some pasture, and, close by, a great supply of fuel in the bushy growth of myricaria (umbû) and of tamarisk on the alluvium. Then there is a stretch of over 12 miles before any more vegetation is met with. Then at Kyam, where some hot springs come out, there is a spread of grass extending some way up the valley, and there is brushwood also, and farther up, to the very head, there is grass to be found in places. Again, at Gogrâ, in the side valley,

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir
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Mr. Shaw, and Dr. Cayley went separately over the plateaus, the last to explore for a trade-route, the other two on their adventurous journey to Yārkand. In the next year, 1869, I myself went across the plateaus to the eastern branch of the Kārakāsh River, following partly in Mr. Johnson's and partly in Dr. Cayley's footsteps, and in this journey made the observations which I shall now put down. In 1870 Mr. Forsyth's party, on the first mission to Yārkand, went over the plains; they returned by a new route on the west.* Then, in 1873, one party attached to the second Yārkand mission took the old route, but as yet no detailed news of their doings have been made public.

In the regions through which the reader has hitherto followed me—in the high-level valleys, among the bare mountains, of Rupshu—no great difficulty in providing supplies and means of carriage presents itself to the traveller. The inhabitants of Rupshu, though few, are enough in number to attend to the wants of those who pass through their ground, and their cattle do all that is wanted for the carrying of baggage. Bare as that country is when looked at as a whole, yet, with very few exceptions, there are to be found, at distances which are practicable for a day's march, water, some amount of pasture for the baggage animals, and fuel, either furze or *burtse*, or sometimes (as at one or two of the halting-places in the Indus Valley) the dung of the kyang, or wild ass. But now, in going beyond the basin of the Indus, especially in traversing the high plains with their enclosed drainage-area, one is put to straits to provide carriage for the necessaries of one's camp, and to procure food for the beasts of burden themselves. For at some stages fuel is wanting, at others grass, at others water even. Hence

reduced from the regular Survey, and also some tentative representation of a tract which was afterwards explored by Mr. Hayward, who corrected certain portions. I refer particularly to the valley of the southern branch of the Kārakāsh River, which Hayward, proving it to be the main stream, traced to its source on the south-west of our tract. Mr. Johnson had, however, discerned the connection of this valley with the Kārakāsh drainage, as the following words quoted from his account in the Journal of the Geographical Society will show: "On the west of the plateaus there are no plains, but a series of deep valleys, which are the sources of one of the principal affluents of the Kārakāsh R."

* An account of this journey is given by Dr. Henderson in his 'Lahore to Yārkand.'

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir

special arrangements are necessary to accomplish the journey; and even with these some loss of baggage animals may be expected.

Tānktse is the place whence a start should be made; it is the last large village, and contains a Government store-house, and is the head-quarters of a *kārdār*, or manager, under the Governor of Ladākh. The smaller one's camp, the lighter the baggage, the more likely is one to get comfortably through the journey. With half-a-dozen men of my own, and an equal number of people from the Tānktse and Pāngkong region, we took for our luggage and supplies eleven yāks and five ponies, and brought back, after a month's marching, six yāks and four ponies. This and other experience shows that ponies are far better for the work than yāks; for ponies can carry, besides a light load of baggage for their master, barley for themselves, which yāks, not being used to eating it, will not be able to live on; ponies also do the day's march quicker than the yāk, and therefore have so much the more time to graze on the scanty, thin, pasture that here and there is found. My own journey was the more trying for the animals in that, after passing through the most desert part to where the valleys begin to decline to Turkistān and to become less bare of vegetation, they had to return over the same desert, without recruiting themselves in the lower pastures.

From Tānktse, or Pāngkong, the road leads one over ground that was described in the last chapter to the Chāngchenmo Valley. This it leaves by the valley in which is situated Gogrā, which is the last place where water, grass, and fuel are all to be found in plenty. I shall not trouble the reader to follow me through each day's march as I made it, but shall rather try to give him an idea of the character of the country such as I myself derived from observing it in the outward and homeward journeys, with the help, I must add, of Mr. Johnson's map. A list of the marches will be found in Appendix IV., Route 27.

THE SOUTHERN WATERSHED.

The southern watershed of the plateaus lies to the north of the eastern portion of the Chāngchenmo Valley, and is continued

2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir [illegible]

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under eight thousand feet high, while most of the people live at an elevation of between twelve thousand and fifteen thousand feet, no wonder that few venture from their country, and when they do, have soon to return or die in the denser air of the lower countries. During the days of the summer months it is exhaustingly hot, in winter, freezing cold; the summer nights can also be bitter.

Routes are divided up into so many "marches"; in the old days a march was considered the distance which could be reasonably covered in a day, providing at the end a good camping ground for the night, and usually places where fresh coolies could be employed.

The route from Srinagar to Leh which goes by way of Sonamarg, Dras and Kargil is broken up into sixteen marches, the first portion to Sonamarg being divided up into four, whereas in these days it can easily be done in a day, and providing the weather is good, this also applies to some extent to a few of the other marches laid down for other parts of the journey which is a distance over all of two hundred and forty-two miles. Since it is one of the main trade routes into Kashmir it is not astonishing that the road, when passable, is good; by that I mean good the whole of the way for horses and pack mules, and with a surprising number of quite reasonable rest houses on the way.

The first pass to be traversed after leaving Sonamarg is eleven thousand, three hundred feet high and between Beltal and Matayan. It is usually open for horses from June to December, though we soon discovered that we had been well advised to employ Dras ponymen for that part of the journey; they know the route and the short cuts as well as the diversions to save hard climbing, in addition to being able to forecast accurately the weather in the mountains.

This pass is considered to be very dangerous with sudden storms and avalanches descending upon in it the early part of the year, so that the advice always given is that there must be at least two fine crisp days after such a happening before one attempts a crossing. On the occasion when we went over, our men had refused to move for two days and then insisted on starting from Baltal, the last stage, in the early hours of the

2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir
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497 morning so that we reached the summit with the dawn. There
133 the wind was bitterly cold; we followed the lower track, for the road along the face of the cliff was impossible.

The Tibetan name for the pass is Zoji La; this was the first time that we discovered that most of the places from there on had two names, a Kashmiri one and a Tibetan one. Unfortunately the map seemed to have mixed them up, probably using the best known, but we did not always strike men of the country who recognised them.

[485] Once over the pass the country changes completely; there is already a Tibetan atmosphere in the air. Going down the other side there are numerous little dak huts built by the roadside for the use of those who chance the journey too late and get caught by the weather.

361 We came upon what we at first imagined would be the start of
136 a village, but found it to consist of a house or two, a telegraph post and a rest house. At many places tracks led off, some to lone, distant "farms", some to parts which were known to be good for shikar, for game is plentiful for the sportsman in parts of Ladakh. It is the home of the ibex and the markhor; both are of the wild goat family; there are wild sheep and kiang—sandy red, wild asses with dark manes and standing about twelve hands high—which are impossible to break; then there are red bear, snow leopard and in parts wolves are to be found; antelope and gazelle are common as are the reddish-brown marmot.

491 Here and there places had been marked on the Srinagar-printed map as the spot where a bridge would be found over the river, but there was no sign of it, probably the floods of the last season had carried it away, and we had to ford the waters; then on closer examination of the map we noticed a mark at the spot we had selected and decided that the printer had forgotten to make up his letterpress to include it in the key, or perhaps we were credited with enough common sense to know.

485 The first night we reached a rest house, and were there only just in time, for a quarter of an hour later a large party of men from Leh arrived; a few remained to sleep under the verandahs
515 outside—the stench of bodies was overpowering. I have been assured that the men of Ladakh are bathed three times only in their lives, when they are born, when they marry and when they